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THE SIMILES OF KALIDASA

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CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The Sanskrit language has held undisputed sway over the minds of the people all over India from ancient times to the present day. Poetry and philosophy, language and rhetoric, mathematics and the physical sciences, medicine and surgery, education, law, administration and other professions, arts and architecture, and indeed, all the skills in all the spheres of human activity gained currency and found expression through Sanskrit in every part of the Indian sub-continent and in every age. All the languages of India, except the Dravidian group in the extreme south, owe their origin to Sanskrit, and, all languages, without exception, owe their development to Sanskrit. Sanskrit thus signifies the heritage that is India.

Sanskrit poetry is of extraordinary beauty, grace and compression. It was the tradition to express all thoughts from geometrical theorems to instructions on surgery, from the law of contracts to philosophical discussions, and even on mundane activities of everyday life in a poetic form, perhaps for the facility of assured and enduring retention. Often, a mere suggestion is made, leaving the meaning to be stretched as far as the reader's imagination can possibly reach, thereby leading to several ingenuous, sometimes conflicting, interpretations in the hands of learned commentators.

VALMIKI

It is claimed that the first epic ever composed in any language of the world was in Sanskrit: Valmiki's Ramayana. Valmiki, the Adi Kavi or the first poet, was a forester with a far-reaching vision; he conceived the epic and put it in a poetic form which suggested itself to him when he was deeply moved by great compassion when a hunter shot down the male among a pair of mating birds in the forest. In form and content, in the development of incident and the delineation of character of the hero, the heroine and the anti-hero and a host of minor characters, in the description of the passions which dominated them, in their triumphs and tragedies, in the strength and the weaknesses of the high and the low, in the conflicts between and within the good and the evil and in depicting the situations grand and ludicrous, the epic stands out among the best in world literature. He was verily the poet of India, taking the reader through the entire sub-continent from the Himalayas to Lanka, and from the countries beyond the Hindu Kush range to Assam, with graphic descriptions of the mountains, rivers and forests, of the flora and the fauna of every region, of the snows and the tropics, and of the plains, cities and villages and the people inhabiting them.

KALIDASA

A thousand years or more separate Kalidasa from Valmiki. The last vestiges of pastoral civilisation had faded away; agriculture had started to flourish, and urbanisation was on the way. Trade and commerce expanded

not only internally but with foreign countries like Greece and Rome. Persia and China were well-known as neighbours and cultural contacts established with them. New religions and new schools of philosophy in Hinduism appeared and spread to other countries. Universities were established and were recognised as centres of learning to which flocked students and scholars from all parts of the country, and other countries as well. Foreigners invaded and were absorbed in the Indian civilisation; a cosmopolitan outlook became the order of the day for the upper classes; wealth accumulated and, with it, class differences widened; a new leisured class grew with new patterns of culture. Mental activity was divorced from, and considered superior to, the physical. Slavery was veiled by the caste system in consonance with the new social relations. Kalidasa was at once the product, and one of the greatest exponents, of this 'Golden age of Indian History' like that of Pericles in Greece a thousand years earlier and of Elizabeth the first of England a thousand years later.

Acknowledging Valmiki as the pre-eminent poet, Kalidasa tóok in his sweep the entire country and beyond and the entire gamut of human emotions. But, his characters are gods and demi-gods, kings and seers; the common folk are rarely in evidence. He has handed down to us two epics, three dramas and two lyrical compositions of exceptional beauty. His knowledge was encyclopaedic for his age. He undoubtedly knew the ways of the wise and the kings. He writes of war and peace, of love, and of life in the raw as well as in the sublime. He views every pleasure and pain, elation and frustration

love and hatred with detachment and compassion. He was undoubtedly patronised by kings, and respected by his contemporaries. Every succeeding generation of poets has drawn inspiration from his works as from Valmiki's.

There is a well-known saying that Kalidasa excels in similes. It is the purpose of this book to introduce the reader to some of those similes.

THE SIMILE

"Poetry is the queen of arts; and Upama (simile) the prime ornament of that queen," so goes a famous Sanskrit saying.

The etymological meaning of the word 'Upama' is 'near or approximate measure of the real', implying that what is sought to be conveyed by the simile is the description of the unknown, or the higher, object with reference to the known, or the common, subject. The similarity should be of the essence, not of any superficial quality.

According to the "Nyaya Sutras" the system dealing with the means by which the mind is led to the right conclusion, 'Upama' is not a mere ornament, but one of the means of right knowledge. The appropriateness, or proper use of the 'Upama' is to be judged with reference to its contribution to our knowledge of the subject. However, in course of time, it was used as an end in itself for its real, or supposed, beauty and an embellishment of the language.

'Upama' has been used extensively in the Vedas, Upanishads, Itihasas and Puranas. All works on grammar

and specialist literature on rhetoric refer to 'Upama' and deal at length with its usage and abusage.

Technically, the object of the 'Upama' is known as 'Upamana' and the subject 'Upameya'. 'Upama' is classified into four elements (a) form, (b) attribute, (c) action and (d) purpose, answering respectively the questions: (a) what it looks like, (b) what its qualities are, (c) what it does and (d) what its purpose is. An 'Upama' which answers all these questions is a complete 'Upama'. Otherwise it is a partial 'Upama', which, nevertheless, in no way detracts from its merit as a means of explaining the subject or clarifying an idea.

Perhaps, an example may help one better to understand this point. Take Upama 14 of this book under the heading "The Big Tree in a Forest Fire".

Dasaratha is compared to a banyan tree for the qualities of ageless antiquity, hoary tradition and the action of sheltering minor chieftains and the people; and Parasurama to the all-consuming forest fire on account of his ferocity and purposeless destructive power and mutual antagonism between the tree and the fire. Rama is compared to the rain which conjures up in our minds the dark rain cloud (in form), assuring timely relief (attribute), quenching the fire (action) and the revival of life (purpose). It is thus a complete Upama, satisfying all the four elements.

Or, take Upama 2 under the heading: 'Taxation'. The collection and use of taxes by kings is compared with the drawing of moisture from various sources by the sun and returning it in the form of rain. The comparison is

limited to the action of both, not to their attributes or respective forms. Nevertheless, the simile is striking.

The subject of the simile may be concrete or abstract like the very last one in the book, which deserves a section to itself comparing the concrete act of Hanuman's crossing the sea with the abstract idea of a person who has shed all feeling of private possessions crossing the sea of life.

Some general rules laid down by the ancient Indian rhetoricians for similes are of interest.

The object of the Upama must be loftier than the subject compared with, such loftiness being shown in the qualities of leadership, the benefit derived by society and similar qualities. The basic quality for which the comparison is made should be distinguished from incidental qualities which may be, or may not be, comparable between the subject and the object. The 'Upama' may be complete or partial, explicit or implicit. If the Upama is in respect of a particular attribute, it must fully depict it with reference to the subject and object of comparison bringing out the essence in both.

Clarity is essential in an 'Upama': it should conform to accepted usage and state in unambiguous terms what is sought to be brought out by the 'Upama'.

The comparison of several objects to one subject is considered bad form. Where it is used, each succeeding object should be superior to the preceding one. Take for example Upama 60 under the heading: 'The child adds lustre to the father'. The lamp, the milky way and the

purity of speech are the objects of comparison to Himavan; the light shed by the lamp, the celestial river and the conduct of the speaker as also the deed described by him are the objects of comparison to Himavan's daughter, Uma. Clearly, in that age when the unknown was considered superior to the known and the abstract to the concrete, each succeeding object is superior to the preceding one. The composite effect is far better than what one simile alone could provide.

Dr. Johnson's dictum that a perfect simile should both illustrate and ennoble the subject is still a sound test and justification for using a simile. Simile, metaphor, parable, and analogy involve comparison of a thing, an act, an experience or a quality with another. A metaphor gives concrete form to an abstract idea and separates one quality from the rest; it is therefore true at one point only. Parable is concealed analogy, intended to drive home a moral. Any analogy breaks down if stretched too far; indeed, a good analogy should break down when it has served its purpose. Simile is in a plane higher than parable, mataphor or analogy. While, no doubt, it compares the object with the subject, it may be concrete or abstract; it is not didactic and can be stretched as far as one's ingenuity can reach.

In Kalidasa, it is always a pleasant exercise to find new attributes and new purposes for old, even hackneyed, similes. The various learned commentators have cleared the ground for such exercises.

THE UPAMAS OF KALIDASA

Kalidasa's works teem with Upamas of every variety and description listed in the various treatises on Rhetoric. His Upamas number well over a thousand, about half of them in 'Raghuvamsam' alone, and a quarter in 'Kumara Sambhavam', especially in the first eight cantos. Almost one-half of the stanzas of 'Megha Dutam' contains Upamas.

The collection of Upamas in this book is motley. It is difficult to assign any reason for picking out some gems among the many; and, quite a few outstanding similes might have been missed in digging the mine and sifting the ore.

Appendix I is intended for the readers whose curiosity may be stimulated by this humble effort to go to the original sources, a perpetual feast for one's imagination.

Kalidasa draws his objects of comparison from nature, the sun and the moon, the mountains and the valleys, the cloud, the rain, the river and the sea, the trees and flowers, of which the lotus of both red and blue varieties predominates. He also draws from birds, like Hamsa and Chakravaka; from animals, like the lion, the elephant, the deer and the snake. Hindu mythology provides useful source material for many similes. Sometimes, the object is abstract, like rules of grammar, sentiments and emotions. An attempt has been made in Appendix II to list the similes by the objects of comparison, Upamana.

The compiler has no pretensions to Sanskrit scholarship or original research. He has drawn extensively from the ideas and expressions of distinguished commentators, classical and modern, without in the least feeling conscious of plagiarism. He will feel rewarded if this effort is continued and improved upon by competent scholars, in English and other languages.

THE SIMILES OF KALIDASA

I. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

1. भानुः सकृद् युक्त तुरङ्ग एव
   रात्रिं दिवं गन्धवहः प्रयाति ।
   शेषः सदैवाहित भूमिभारः
   षष्ठांश वृत्तेरपि धर्म एषः ॥

AS 5:4

The king's duties never end

Once yoked, do the horses of the Sun's chariot ever stop in their course? Does the wind ever cease to blow?

Does Sesha who bears the burden of the earth on his head ever put it down? Once undertaken, all these have to go on for ever and ever.

So go on the duties of King Dushyanta who derives sustenance from a sixth part of the produce of the people, unfailing and ceaseless.

2. प्रजानामेव भूत्यर्थं
   स ताभ्यो बलिमग्रहीत् ।
   सहस्र गुणमुत्स्रष्टुम्
   आदत्ते हि रसं रविः ॥

Taxation

The sun draws moisture through his thousand rays from many sources: the marshes, the salty oceans, the rivers and ponds and even the dew of the leaves, without hurting any of these. He gives it back to the earth in the form of pure rain to the high and the low alike, the mountains and the plains, the swamps and the seas. The sun does not retain for himself a drop of water.

The king levies taxes in order to increase the wealth of the nation. The taxes come in a thousand ways, from every possible source; but, the king never hurts anyone in the process of tax collection. The income from the taxes is used for the benefit of everyone alike; the king never keeps any part of the taxes collected for his personal use.

3. इन्दोरगतयः पद्मे
सूर्यस्य कुमुदेऽंशवः ।
गुणास्तस्य विपक्षेऽपि
गुणिनो लेभिरेऽन्तरम् ॥

RV 17 : 75

Influence on friends and foes

The sun dispels darkness, gives heat and enables the plants to grow; yet, the night-lotus shuts up at sunrise and would not let the sun's rays enter it.

The moon also dispels darkness, pleases the people and brings happiness to them; yet, the day-lotus shuts up at sunset and would not let the moon see it.

All that is good is not appreciated by all people.

Not so with King Atithi. His good qualities influence the hearts of not only his friends but also his foes.

4. दुरितं दर्शनेन घ्नं-
स्तत्त्वार्थेन नुदंस्तमः ।
प्रजाः स्वतन्त्रयां चक्रे
शश्वत्सूर्य इवोदितः ॥

RV 17:74

How the king leads

The sun dispels darkness so that the people may go about their work freely; it does not tell them where to go or what to do. The sun purifies the people and irradiates their homes with his rays.

So does the king to his people. He dispels their ignorance, so that they may know the truth; but, he does not dictate to them or command them. The people get purified by emulating him and following his exemplary conduct: they do not have to be told what to do and what not to do.

5. मन्दोत्कण्ठाः कृतास्तेन
गुणाधिकतया गुरौ ।
फलेन सहकारस्य
पुष्पोद्गम इव प्रजाः ॥

RV 4:9

Public memory is short

The mango tree flowers in spring ; the flower has an intoxicating fragrance and is regarded as one of the arrows of Kama (Cupid), the God of love.

But, when the flower develops into a ripe, delicious fruit, no one remembers the flower.

So with King Dilipa and his son Raghu. When Raghu ascended the throne, the people became less ardent about Dilipa, and, attracted by Raghu's personality, gradually forgot Dilipa.

6, भवन्ति नम्रास्तरवः फलागमै
नवाम्बुभिर्दूरं विलम्बिनो घनाः ।
अनुद्धताः सत्पुरुषाः समृद्धिभिः
स्वभाव एवैष परोपकारिणाम् ॥

AS 5 : 12

The benefactors

Trees laden with fruit bend low to the earth ; clouds laden with water hang low. So do good people when they become rich ; they bend low to make themselves accessible and shower prosperity on others.

7. स्वसुख निरभिलाषः खिद्यसे लोकहेतोः
प्रतिदिनमथवा ते वृत्तिरेवं विधैव ।
अनुभवति हि मूर्ध्ना पादपस्तीव्रमुष्णं
शमयति परितापं छायया संश्रितानाम् ॥

AS 5 : 7

The tree in the noonday sun

The tree takes all the intense heat of the summer sun on its head and relieves the fatigue of those who seek shelter under its shade.

So does the king take upon himself the sufferings of his people, unmindful of his own discomforts, in order to make his people happy.

8. सन्तस्याभिगमनाद् अत्यर्थं महतः कृशाः ।
उदधेरिव जीमूताः प्रापुर्दातृत्वमर्थिनः ॥

RV. 17:72

The donor

The clouds gather their water mainly from the seas ; they shower the water so gathered on the parched earth and earn the gratitude of the people. To the people, the clouds, not the seas, appear to be their prime donors.

Whenever the weak and the afflicted approached King Atithi for alms, he gave them so much in excess that, in turn, each of them gave alms to many others and earned their gratitude, the prime donor, Atithi, forgotten.

9. रघुरश्रुमुखस्य तस्यतत्
कृतवानीप्सितमात्मज प्रियः ।
न तु सर्प इव त्वचं पुनः
प्रतिपेदे व्यपवर्जितां श्रियम् ॥

RV 8:13

Shedding the slough

A time comes when the snake finds its slough hard to bear. It goes to a place harsh and rough with stones and barks of trees and, squeezing through, sheds its slough, never to put it on again. It shines bright with the lustre of the new-born.

Raghu knew that the time had come to shed his kingly role when his son, Aja, was fully equipped to assume the responsibilities of kingship. Shedding his regal splendour, Raghu retired to the forest to perform penance. He would not put on his mantle again, even when pressed by others. Serene in the autumn of his life, he shone with a new lustre not known before.

10. अचिराधिष्ठित राज्यः
शत्रुः प्रकृतिष्वरूढमूलत्वात् ।
नव संरोहण शिथिलस्तरु-
रिव सुकरः समुद्धर्तुम् ॥

MA 1 : 8

A tree just planted

Once they strike roots, the big trees, like the 'neem' the 'peepul' and the 'vata', cannot be easily removed; even if dug up, or cut, their far-flung roots put forth fresh shoots. Why? because they have grown so friendly with their environment and struck deep roots in the soil that will not easily let the tree go away.

Not so, the young freshly planted tree, when it is yet to acquire friends who care for it.

So is the new king vulnerable to attack by his enemies. In course of time, he builds up the friendship and loyalty of his people and the army, who would stand by him and fight for him against odds.

11. आपाद पद्म प्रणताः
कलमा इव ते रघुम् ।
फलैः संवर्धयामासु-
रुत्खात प्रतिरोपिताः ॥

RV 4:37

Transplantation of seedling

The paddy stalks grow stronger and the yield is higher, when right seedlings are selected and transplanted in specially prepared fields. In due course, the transplanted crops grow heavy with ears of corn, bend down to touch the lotuses at their feet and pour, as it were, their grain over the lotus.

When Raghu conquered the country, he did not uproot the ruling dynasty. He selected gifted young princes, trained them in administration and put them back on the throne in a suitable environment. So placed, the princes, in turn, improved the wealth and prosperity of their countries and poured forth voluntarily a part of their increased wealth as tribute at Raghu's lotus-like feet.

12. न खरो न च भूयसा मृदुः
पवमानः पृथिवीरुहानिव ।
स पुरस्कृत मध्यमक्रमो
नमयामास नृपाननुद्धरन् ॥ RV 8:9

The tree in the wind

If the wind blows very hard, it uproots the trees; it is sultry and uncomfortable, when the wind is still. It is only a gentle breeze that rustles the leaves and just bends the branches.

Raghu was neither terrible with his presence nor inane. He made his presence felt gently, and made his chieftains responsive to his policies of administration, without either removing them from power or letting them have their own way.

13. पित्रा विसृष्टां मदपेक्षया यः
श्रियं युवाप्यङ्कगतामभोक्ता ।
इयन्ति वर्षाणि तया सहोग्र-
मभ्यस्यतीव व्रतमासिधारम् ॥

RV 13 : 67

A sword's edge

A young man shares a bed with a young woman, laying a sharp-edged sword between them, so that they refrain from even touching each other. This is known as 'the penance of the sharp-edged sword'.

Bharata possessed all the opportunities of youth, a time for enjoyment; being a prince by birth and upbringing, with a kingdom thrown into his lap by his father with no civil strife or military invasion, and with no rival contender to the throne, he could have enjoyed himself as he liked. Yet, for many years, he voluntarily gave up enjoying the kingdom, performing 'the penance of the sharp-edged sword'.

14. तस्मिन् गते विजयिनं परिरभ्य रामं
स्नेहादमन्यत पिता पुनरेव जातम् ।
तस्याभवत् क्षणशुचः परितोषलाभः
कक्षाग्नि लङ्घित तरोरिव वृष्टिपातः ॥

RV 11 : 92

The big tree in a forest fire

One essential difference between plant life and animal life is that no plant can go to the help of another, or even try to save itself, when a calamity occurs. An ancient banyan tree, majestic and hoary with tradition, had gathered in its shade dry leaves and grass, bushes and plants, some dried up and some still green. One day, a forest fire broke out, burning up the undergrowth and threatening to consume the tree itself, which, of course, would take sometime. The tree was helpless to save the undergrowth, or even itself. At that moment, rain came in a deluge to rescue the tree and relieve its distress.

Dasaratha, the banyan tree, sheltering minor royalties and chieftains, felt helpless and sad that he could not save his retinue and his newly married sons and their wives, not even himself, from the conflagaration in the shape of Parasurama, who had already destroyed generations of ruling princes. At that moment, Rama appeared as the rain quenching the huge fire, defeated Parasurama and saved Dasaratha and his dependants. It looked as if they all had a rebirth.

15. राजर्षि वंशस्य रवि प्रसूते-
रुपस्थितः पश्यत कीदृशोऽयम् ।
मत्तः सदाचार शुचेः कलङ्कः
पयोदवाताद् इव दर्पणस्य ॥

RV 14:37

The king holds a mirror up to his people

The king personifies the ideals of his people: in his leadership, grace and conduct, the people see the consummation of their life's aspirations; they try to follow his example. He is verily the mirror of his people.

When rain-clouds chance to blow across a mirror, the mirror gets tarnished and the image appearing in it distorted. No doubt, the moisture will clear and the distortion disappear, as soon as the sun shines again or when the mirror is wiped. But, till then, the blemish and the distortion remain. If a similar blemish were to occur in the mirror of public opinion, causing a distortion in the image of the king, can the king afford to wait, until the blemish gets cleared by itself?

King Rama belonged to the solar race, that is, of the sun which illumines the whole world and signifies the ideal of purity to all. Such a tradition of unblemished glory in the lineage of Rama is his to uphold and to pass on to posterity. When a scandal concerning Sita, his wife, has crept in, however unjustified and temporary it may be, can Rama afford to continue in office with a tarnished image? Such an image ruins not only the king but all the people whose lives the king reflects and moulds.

16. पौरेषु सोऽहं बहुलीभवन्त-
मपां तरङ्गेष्विव तैल बिन्दुम् ।
सोढुं न तत्पूर्वमवर्णमीशे
आलानिकं स्थाणुमिव द्विपेन्द्रः ॥

RV 14 : 38

Oil on water

A spot of oil falls on the sea. The wind blows hard, The waves rise high. The oil is carried by the waves all over the waters. Not a drop of the fallen oil can be recovered; any attempt to do so would only make it spread further.

A spot of scandal has fallen on the royal capital. Ayodhya. How can he remove it or suppress it? Rama finds it hard to bear the scandal and fervently desires to get rid of it.

17. व्योम पश्चिमकला स्थितेन्दु वा
पङ्कशेषमिव घर्म पल्वलम् ।
राज्ञि तत्कुलमभूत् क्षयातुरे
वामनार्चिरिव दीप भाजनम् ॥

RV 19 : 51

The decay of the once-powerful

The moon used to sail majestically along the blue sky spreading its rays all over it. But, today, one has to search for its little crescent in the dark sky.

The tank used to be full with wavelets lapping its shores. But, today, standing on its shore, one looks in

the distance at some mud and some green grass and concludes that there may be some water nearby.

The lamp used to burn bright supplied with oil; but, today, the oil is gone and the flame is flickering; soon the lamp will spend itself out.

The last king in the distinguished line of Raghu is now in such a state of decline.

18. राघवोऽपि चरणौ तपोनिधेः
क्षम्यतामिति वदन् समस्पृशत् ।
निर्जितेषु तरसा तरस्विनां
शत्रुषु प्रणतिरेव कीर्तये ॥

RV 11 : 89

Uphill and downhill

A person going uphill bends down resting on his stick and plods on; a person coming downhill has to be erect.

Parasurama was the sixth incarnation of Vishnu and Rama the seventh, one on the downgrade, after destroying generations of Kshatriyas and the other on the upgrade, yet to consummate his mission of destroying evil and establishing justice on earth. They clash for no reason but the arrogance of Parasurama. Rama humbles his adversary's pride but humbly prostrates at the feet of Parasurama, his elder.

Humility is the badge of success and adds to the prestige of the victor.

19. नरेन्द्र मूलायतनादनन्तरं
तदास्पदं श्रीर्युवराजसंज्ञितम् ।
अगच्छदंशेन गुणाभिलाषिणी
नवावतारं कमलादिवोत्पलम् ॥

RV 3 : 36

Fickle Lakshmi

Traditionally, Lakshmi, the goddess of the wealth, valour, victory, strength, perseverance and all manly qualities, is constantly searching for a vigorous, bright, chivalrous and valiant youth on whom to bestow her favours.

She had long showered her grace on Dilipa. After Raghau was crowned heir-apparent, she gradually moved her resting place to his shoulders, attracted by his qualities like a bee moving from a fading lotus to a newly opened bud.

20. इति विस्मृतान्यकरणीयमात्मनः
सचिवावलम्बित धुरं धराधिपम् ।
परिवृद्ध रागमनुबन्ध सेवया
मृगया जहार चतुरेव कामिनी ॥

RV 9 : 74

Controlling desire

The flame of desire never gets extinguished by being fed; unsatiated, desire grows with every attempt to satisfy it.

A beautiful woman versed in the arts of love holds her lover slave to herself to the exclusion of all his other duties and responsibilities.

So with Dasaratha. Love for the hunt held him captive to such an extent that he forgot his duties as a king. He entrusted his kingdom to his ministers and devoted himself to the sport.

21. यंसर्वं शैला: परिकल्प्य वत्सं
मेरौ स्थिते दोग्धरि दोहदक्षे ।
भास्वन्ति रत्न नि महौषधीश्च
पृथूपदिष्टां दुदुहुर्धरित्रीम् ॥

KS 1 : 2

Mother Earth

Earth is the repository of all wealth: human, animal, bird and plant life; mineral resources; all forms of energy; in fact, anything necessary to sustain and develop human society. It only requires labour to extract all these from the earth, and organisation to put them to proper use.

The ancient man first learnt to plough the land and then to harness energy in the form of cattle and water for irrigation to improve agriculture. He milked the earth of its products.

Pruthu is credited to be the father of the plough in Hindu mythology. He directed Meru the milkman to use Himavan as the calf to milk the earth and to bring the best out of it for the benefit of mankind.

Out of the earth came Sita and out of the son of the earth, Himavan, came Uma. Out of Pruthu's direction of labour, came the medicinal herbs and the gems, and, in due course, all that the earth has yielded and will yield.

II. WAR

22. विभावसुः सारथिनेव वायुना
घन व्यपायेन गभस्तिमानिव ।
बभूव तेनातितरां सुदुःसहः
कट प्रभेदेन करीव पार्थिवः ॥

RV 3 : 37

Wind and Fire

It is difficult to quench a fire, when it is fanned by the wind, to gaze at the bright sun in the cloudless autumn sky and to subdue an elephent in rut.

So was Dilipa, the king, unconquerable, when associated with Raghu, the crown-prince.

23. शिलीमुखोत्कृत्त शिरः फलाढ्या
च्युतैः शिरस्त्रैश्चषकोत्तरेव ।
रणक्षितिः शोणित मद्य कुल्या
रराज मृत्योरिव पानभूमिः ॥

RV 7 : 49

The battlefield

The wine glass was the iron helmet covering the warrior's head; the wine the flowing blood; the stirrer the arrow; and, the cherry the warrior's blood-smeared head. The battlefield looked like death's tavern.

24. परेण भग्नेऽपि बले महौजा
ययावजः प्रत्यरि सैन्यमेव ।
धूमो निवर्त्येत समीरणेन
यतस्तु कक्षास्तत एव वह्निः ॥

RV 7 : 55

The smoke and the fire

Where there is smoke, there is fire. But, while the fire is stationary, burning up combustible materials, the smoke follows the direction of the wind.

When the battle raged, Aja went on destroying the enemy forces, standing his ground and steadily advancing wherever he wanted to go, regardless of the fortunes of the battle; his army advanced, when the offensive was on their side and retreated, when they were thrown back by superior arms.

25. यच्चकार विवरं शिलाघने
ताडकोरसि स रामसायकः ।
अप्रविष्ट विषयस्य रक्षसां
द्वारतामगमदन्तकस्य तत् ॥

RV 11 : 18

Rama's arrow

We find a formidable obstruction accross our path. Due to fear and lack of courage and strength to tackle the difficulty, most of us hover around waiting for a brave and strong person to clear the way and make it easy for us to pass through.

The god of death was in similar circumstances, afraid of the Rakshasa clan and waiting hesitantly to perform his duties. Then came Rama's arrow to his aid drilling through the hard rock of Tataka's chest a hole so that the god of death could enter it and claim the lives of the clan in due performance of his task.

26 वचसैव तयोर्वाक्य-
मस्त्रमस्त्रेण निघ्नतो: ।
अन्योन्य जय संरम्भो
ववृधे वादिनोरिव ॥

RV 12 : 92

Logic of the logistics

Logic is dialectic. A statement (thesis) is put forward by one contestant; it is countered by another statement (anti-thesis). A third statement (synthesis) emerges out of the two. All the three of them follow agreed rules of logic. In turn, the synthesis treated as a statement (thesis) is followed by a counter-statement (anti-thesis), again to be resolved into a synthesis. Every succeeding thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis is at a higher level, leading to closer approximations to truth and the solution of the problem at hand.

Both contestants are equally interested in arriving at a conclusion, the solution to a problem. Both rigorously follow the same authorities (Dharma) and adopt the same rules of logic, system, investigation and analysis (Tarka, Nyaya, Mimamsa and Vyakarana) and aim to reach conclusions speedily,

The battle between Rama and Ravana followed the same dialectic. The established rules of warfare were strictly observed. Ravana did not resort to magic spells or fraud. They destroyed each other's weapons and took to higher and more effective weapons, Neither was rash; nor did they resort to futile weapons nor wish to prolong the conflict. Both of them were keenly interested in resolving their conflict speedily.

27 अमोघं संदधे चास्मै
धनुष्येक धनुर्धरः ।
ब्राह्म-मस्त्रं प्रियाशोक
शल्य निष्कर्षणौषधम् ॥ RV 12 : 97

Locating and extracting the focus

Foreign matter enters a vital part of the human body; it cannot be absorbed into the system. Pus-cells form around it and the infection spreads all over the system. The focus has to be located and extracted.

Improper love for Sita had entered Ravana's heart causing great suffering. It spread all over his system corrupting all his activities and emotions and involving his kith and kin. It had to be brought out. Rama's arrow provided the unfailing surgical remedy. It rooted out the cause of Sita's suffering from Ravana's heart.

28 गतश्रियं वैरि वराभिभूतां
दशां सुदीनामभितो दधानाम् ।
नारीमवीरमिव तामवेक्ष्य स
बाढमन्तः करुणापरोऽभूत् ॥ KS 13 : 36

Beauty married to a eunuch

Kumara entered the capital city of the gods and saw around him vast desolation; the citizens with heads hung low, eyes dull and expressionless, with valour gone, their homes decaying, the beautiful parks ravished, the elephants with broken tusks, the horses wounded and the chariots with broken axles. The people were terrified at the thought of Taraka, who had defeated and humiliated them and pillaged their city many times. The gods had no will to fight. Still, the city was beautiful and looked charming to the young warrior, in spite of the ruin and devastation.

Kumara was overwhelmed with pity for the city which could not be protected by its rulers. It was like a young girl in the flush of youth who found herself married to a eunuch who is unable to protect her. Of what avail is her charm?

III. LANGUAGE

29. अथवा कृतवाग्द्वारे
वंशेऽस्मिन् पूर्वसूरिभिः ।
मणौ वज्र समुत्कीर्णे
सूत्रस्येवास्ति मे गतिः ॥

RV 1 : 4

The path-finder

The pioneering pathfinder faces many hurdles; he overcomes them with fortitude and faith in his mission. His efforts make it easier for his successors, each of whom smoothens and broadens the path, making it increasingly easy for posterity.

For the poet, the 'word' is the drilling tool. As the author of the Ramayana, Valmiki had drilled through the gem of the solar race and made a hole, through which one could pass a thread and hold the gem high. Once the hole has been made, it is easy for others to wear the jewel, its gem polished and set. I am no more than the string which goes easily through the hole made in the gem.

30. स वृत्त चूलश्चलकाकपक्षकैः
अमात्य पुत्रैः सवयोभिरन्वितः ।
लिपेर्यथावद् ग्रहणेन वाङ्मयं
नदीमुखेनेव समुद्रमाविशत् ।

RV 3 : 28

The letter

A ship is constructed in a dockyard: then, it has to negotiate the channel before it can reach the sea.

The study of language follows a similar natural order: the letter (phoneme), the word, the meaning, the union of word and meaning or construction and, lastly, the embellishments of language.

Unless one knows the letter thoroughly, he cannot venture into the ocean of words.

31. तमर्थमिव भारत्या
सुतया योक्तुमर्हसि ।
अशोच्या हि पितुः कन्या
सद्भर्तृ प्रतिपादिता ॥

KS 6:79

नीलकण्ठ परिभुक्त यौवनां
तां विलोक्य जननी समाश्वसत्
भर्तृवल्लभतया हि मानसीं
मातुरस्यति शुचं वधूजनः ॥

KS 8:12

Fulfilment of the union

The 'word' is but a sound or a group of letters, conveying sense only when a meaning is attached to it. By itself, word is inert material: meaning gives it significance and life. Words are necessary to convey information; but, huckstering with words is a futile exercise of

wit. Only word and meaning taken together can be productive of knowledge and action.

Uma is the 'word', Siva the meaning. Their union, 'Yoga', is the fruit cherished by the gods, Having achieved their union, Uma's father, Himavan, got complete fulfilment of his purpose.

What about the mother?

Parvati and Siva enjoyed their honeymoon roaming over the Himalayas. Her mother saw how fully her daughter's youth was enjoyed by her husband: gestures of bashfulness, secret, sidelong glances at her husband, her lips and neck showing signs of bites and scratches and many other signs of the exercise of love. For, what are youth and beauty worth, if they are not enjoyed with a lover? And, how else can a mother's feelings for the happiness of her daughter be gratified than by the signs of her enjoyment by the bridegroom?

IV. NATURE

32. अनन्त रत्न प्रभवस्य यस्य
हिमं न सौभाग्य विलोपि जातम् ।
एको हि दोषो गुण संनिपाते
निमज्जतीन्दोर्किरणेष्विवाङ्कः ॥ KS 1 : 3.

One blemish among many virtues

The Himalayas are the home of many good things: the mineral wealth of the mountains, the healing herbs on their slopes, the flora and the fauna, the pure waters flowing from its snows, the shrines on the banks of its rivers, the asramas of the Rishis, the celestial nymphs and the gods who frequent the mountain tops. All these lend holiness, grandeur and charm to the Himalayas and make it great. But amidst all these virtues, there is one blemish which may scare the people away, the eternal snows. What if? That one blemish gets drowned in a cluster of virtues.

The moon in full radiance sails in the blue sky: of course, it has its dark spot. But, does one enjoy the glorious moonlight any the less, thinking of this one blemish?

33. स्निग्ध गंभीर निर्घोषं
एकं स्यन्दनमास्थितौ ।
प्रावृषेण्यं पयोवाहं
विद्युदैरावताविव ॥ RV 1 : 36.

Sonne et lumiere

Tradition has it that the lightning is the cloud's wife. They come together with peals of thunder heralding their approach. They soon pass by showering the much needed rain and recede with a distant rumble of thunder, leaving a rainbow across the sky. The beautiful rain is followed by the charming rainbow.

Dilipa and Sudakshina went in their chariot showering gifts on the people who had gathered to have a look at them along the way. The chariot, decked with garlands of multi-coloured flowers approached, flashed by and receded with a rumble in the distance looking like a rainbow, pleasing to the eyes and the mind.

34. पात्र विशेषं न्यस्तं
गुणान्तरं व्रजति शिल्पमाधातुः ।
जलमिव समुद्र शुक्तौ
मुक्ता फलतां पयोदस्य ॥

MA 1 : 6

A drop of water turns into a pearl

Rain falls equally on the mountains, the plains and the sea. But, the benefit derived from the rain varies according to the nature of its receiver. A single drop of rain falling at the appropriate moment in a waiting, open-mouthed oyster impregnates it with a lustrous pearl.

The teacher imparts knowledge in the arts to whole classes of pupils ; yet, the skill imparted to a worthy pupil achieves excellence, shedding its lustre on both the teacher and the taught.

35. रावणावग्रह क्लान्त-
मिति वागमृतेन सः ।
अभिवृष्य मरुत्सस्यं
कृष्णमेघ स्तिरोदधे ॥

RV 10:48

The rain

The crops were withering. The rains came pouring nectar ; soon, the crops came back to life.

The gods were forlorn under the tyranny of Ravana. Vishnu came like a dark cloud and spoke to them in words like nectar. The gods felt cheered and their languor disappeared.

36. प्राप्तानुगस्सपदि शासनमस्य राजा
सम्पाद्य पातक विलुप्त धृतिनिवृत्तः ।
अंतर्निविष्ट पदमात्म विनाश हेतुं
शापं दधज्ज्वलनमौर्वीमिवांबुराशिः ॥

RV 9:82

The sea on fire

The core of the earth is exceedingly hot ; eternal fire rages under the seabed. The fire prevents the waters continuously carried by the rivers into the oceans ftom overflowing the shores and drowning the earth. The waters, in turn. guard aginst the subterranean fire consuming the earth. These are the checks and balances of nature as understood by the ancient Hindus. At some

point of time and as a result of some failing, the fire will overcome the ocean and destroy the earth.

Dasaratha erred inadvertently in killing a boy, Sravan Kumar, who had come to take water from a pond, mistaking him for an elephant come to drink water. The boy's father cursed Dasaratha to die of the sorrow of separation from his son. Dasaratha bore the curse manfully, without telling his wives or anyone else. The curse was deep in the recesses of his mind, burning him up like the subterranean fire. His cool temper, forbearance and strength of will were vast and deep as the ocean; so, he kept the fire in check. He knew that, one day, the fire of sorrow would overcome his strength and the curse would surely kill him. It did.

37. ज्वलति चलितेन्धनोऽग्निः
विप्रकृतः पन्नगः फणं कुरुते ।
प्रायः स्वं महिमानं क्षोभात्
प्रतिपद्यते हि जनः ॥

AS 6:31

Springs to action

When the faggots in the fire are kindled, the flame blazes; when a snake is roused, it raises up its hood. The flame and the hood are inherent in the smouldering fire and the curled up snake; they rise only under an external impulse.

Only when provoked, the hidden qualities of man become manifest.

Even so, a naturally active person may fall into a depressive mood which he may not fight back. Dushyanta's sorrow knew no bounds when he discovered many years later that he had wronged his innocent wife, Sakuntala, particularly when she needed him most. Consumed by remorse, he became languorous and dejected. It was then that Indra sought his aid to fight a war. This request kindled his self-esteem and helped him to recover his old form; his real qualities became manifest.

38. वपुषा करणोज्झितेन सा
विपतन्ती पतिमप्यपातयत् ।
ननु तैल निषेक बिन्दुना
सह दीपार्चिरुपैति मेदिनीम् ॥ RV 8:38

When misfortunes come

The light is burning bright full with oil. In a moment, it overturns and the flame is put out by the very oil that has been nurturing it; both flame and oil reach the earth together, engulfing it in gloom. The oil and the wick remain; but, there is no flame.

Aja's happiness was blighted when it appeared to be full and complete. His beloved, Indumati, shining bright like a flame was struck down by a garland from heaven. He fell on her lifeless body like oil on the extinct wick and swooned away.

39. आसार सिक्त क्षिति बाष्प योगान्
मामक्षिणोद्यत्र विभिन्न कोशैः ।
विडम्ब्यमाना नव कन्दलैस्ते
विवाह धूमारुण लोचन श्रीः ॥ RV 13:29

Earth's fragrance enveloping a flower

The earth is parched up with the heat of summer. The first drops of rain beating upon the earth turn into vapour and bring forth a warm fragrance. The vapour envelopes the red 'Kantal' flower.

During the marriage ceremony, the newly-weds together perform their first 'Homa'. They raise a fire with twigs and pour into it 'Ghee' and handfuls of puffed rice. Sita's eyes reddened with the smoke rising from the fire, mocking the red 'Kantal' flower enveloped by the earth's vapour.

40. शापोऽप्यदृष्ट तनयानन पद्म शोभे
सानुग्रहो भगवता मयि पातितोऽयम् ।
कृष्यां दहन्नपि खलु क्षितिमिन्धनेद्धो
बीजप्ररोह जननीं ज्वलनः करोति ॥

RV 9 : 80

Even burning can be beneficial

A time there is when deforestation is necessary to settle the growing population on new lands, and to provide new pastures for the cattle. The ashes from the burnt-up forests also help stimulate the growth of new crops.

The curse that be would die in sorrow, owing to separation from his son, burnt in the breast of King Dasaratha. Yet, that he would have a son to carry on the royal line of kings made him happy. He did not mind the scorching curse as it stimulated the growth of his race.

41. अर्थं सप्रतिबन्धं
प्रभुरधिगन्तुं सहायवानेव ।
दृश्यं तमसि न पश्यति
दीपेन विना स चक्षुरपि ॥

MA 1 : 9

Seeing in the dark

The sensory organ in the eye is the same whether it is light or dark. But, perception by the eye becomes possible only when it is aided by light.

One's abilities may be the same under all conditions; but, only when helped by a friend can he easily surmount the obstacles and attain his objective.

42. विद्युत्वन्तं ललित वनिताः सेन्द्रचापं सचित्राः
संगीताय प्रहत मुरजाः स्निग्ध गंभीर घोषम् ।
अन्तस्तोयं मणिमय भुवस्तुङ्गमभ्रं लिहाग्राः
प्रासादास्त्वां तुलयितुमलं यत्र तैस्तैर्विशेषैः

MD 2 : 1

Quite at home in Alaka

The cloud-messenger is assured by the Yaksha that he will find himself in familiar surroundings in Alakapuri, the home of his beloved. The mansions set with precious gems touch the skies, like the clouds traversing the starry skies. Their marble slabs ooze wet with moisture. The women, slender in form and golden in hue, move about like lightning, at once bright and flashing. Their colorful clothes are vivid like the rainbow.

On stages decorated with beautiful paintings, bass drums give a low, deep and sonorous sound reminding you of the gentle thunder rolling. You will not feel a stranger there.

43. तस्याः पातुं सुरगज इव व्योम्नि पश्चार्धलम्बी
त्वं चेदच्छ स्फटिक विशदं तर्कयेस्तिर्यगम्भः ।
संसर्पन्त्या सपदि भवतः स्रोतसिच्छाययासौ
स्यादस्थानोपगत यमुना सङ्गमेवाभिरामा ॥

MD 1 : 51

The cloud on a hill slope

After traversing the hot plains of northern India, the cloud enters the Himalayan region. The Ganga jumps down the steep mountain slopes profuse with sparkling water. The cloud struggling to ascend the mountains stretches itself on the Ganga like an elephant stretching its hindquarters on a river to quench its thirst. As it rises and hovers over, it casts its shadow over the Ganga: it looks as if another beautiful, unexpected confluence has taken place of Ganga meeting with the dark waters of the Yamuna.

44 सा नीयमाना रुचिरान् प्रदेशान्
प्रियं करो मे प्रिय इत्यनन्दत् ।
ना बुद्ध कल्पद्रुमतां विहाय
जातं तमात्मन्यसिपत्त्र वृक्षम् ॥

RV 14 : 48

Kalpaka and asitara

The legendary ,Kalpaka' tree grants every wish of its supplicant; but, the 'Asipatra' tree cuts into pieces anyone who approaches it with its sword-like leaves. It is the unfortunate experience of some who go to their friends and relatives taking them to be the 'Kalpaka, only to find that they are, in fact, the 'Asipatra'.

Sita was in a stage of advanced pregnancy. She expressed to Rama her longing to visit the forests where she roamed with him care-free for thirteen years. She took Rama to be the 'Kalpaka' tree when he granted her wish. Poor woman! When she was led through the beautiful forest, she little thought that Rama was, in fact, the 'Asipatra', and had granted her wish only to get rid of her in this condition.

45. प्रमुदित वरपक्षमेकतस्तत्
क्षितिपति मण्डलमन्यतो वितानम् ।
उषसि सर इव प्रफुल्लपद्मं
कुमुद वन प्रतिपन्न निद्रमासीत् ॥

RV 6 : 86

Simultaneous blooming and fading

It is a common sight to find the night (blue) lotuses and tne day (red) lotuses in the same pond. At sunrise, the night-lotuses droop and close up, while the day-lotuses bloom and open up. The cause is the same; but the result is different.

Indumati chose Aja for her husband in the assemblage of princes. One group of princes approved of her choice and was elated while another group was resentful and disappointed. Contrary effects may flow out of the same phenomenon and at the same place.

46. तस्य प्रसह्य हृदयं किल शोकशङ्कुः
प्लक्ष प्ररोह इव सौधतलं बिभेद ।
प्राणान्तहेतुमपि तं भिषजामसाध्यं
लाभं प्रियानुगमने त्वरया स मेने ॥

RV 8 : 93

A small seed destroys a mansion

The seat of the mind, brain, is set deep in the skull, protected by bone and tissues. The brain receives impressions of the external world through organs of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Wise people carefully discipline these organs in order to regulate the mind and keep it under control.

Notwithstanding these precautions, a small seed of evil may enter the mind by accident ; it may be difficult, even impossible, to expel it. Medicine and surgery will then be of no avail ; the seed will ultimately destroy the mind and body. There is no escape.

A great mansion is well-guarded by troops, entry and exit well-controlled. Yet, a little bird deposits the microscopic 'plaksha' seed somewhere in a crevice ; it will become visible only when it has struck root and

sprouted. No amount of cutting will prevent the growth. One day, the roots of the tree will reach down to the foundations and the mansion will crumble to pieces.

47. तावुभावपि परस्पर स्थितौ
वर्धमान परिहीन तेजसौ ।
पश्यति स्म जनता दिनात्यये
पार्वणौ शशि दिवाकराविव ॥ RV 11:82

The rising moon and the setting sun

The full moon of the vernal equinox rises in the east over a cloudless horizon just when the sun sets in the west. The moon is then colourless and has yet to acquire its natural, bright and pleasant aspect. Soon it will shed its rays on the cool earth, make the people happy and help the healing herbs grow : The departing sun, with its glory on the wane, colours the horizon red. Even so, the full moon owes its promise of grandeur to the sun's light which is what the moon only reflects.

With his glory set after bathing the earth in blood, Parasurama, the earlier 'avatar' of Vishnu stands vanquished by Rama, the later avatar. Rama, who has yet to fulfil his mission of compassion and succour to the weak and the distressed, stands victorious. The fall of the one and the rise of the other are simultaneous.

48. नैर्ऋत घ्नमथ मन्त्रवन्मुनेः
प्रापदस्त्रमवदान तोषितात् ।
ज्योतिरिन्धन निपाति भास्करात्
सूर्यकान्त इव ताटकान्तकः RV 11:21

The inert agent

Tradition mentions a stone, probably a lens, which helps raise a fire in the faggots out of the sun's rays. The stone is inert; the sun's rays by themselves cannot light a fire. But, the skill of the person using the stone with the sun's rays helps light the fire.

Viswamitra had the mantra-astras (weapons) but he could not use them. Only when Rama had been initiated in the use of weaponry could the weapons destroy evil and fulfil their purpose.

49. अथ मदनवधूरुपप्लवान्तं
व्यसन कृशा परिपालयां बभूव ।
शशिन इव दिवातनस्य लेखा
किरण परिक्षय धूसरा प्रदोषम् ॥

KS 4 : 46

The pale winter moon

A pale winter moon hangs over the eastern sky, when the sun is in the western sky. The moon is hidden by a slight fog. What a far cry from the Sarad (autumn) moon which used to shed its splendour from a cloudless sky, only a few months ago. Only after sunset can this winter moon be seen at all.

Rati, widow of Kama, passes her days listlessly, unwilling to show her face in public, waiting for the time when she will be united with her husband, Madana, after Siva relents in his anger with the Love God.

50. सेयं मदीया जननीव तेन
मान्येन राज्ञा सरयूर्वियुक्ता ।
दूरे वसन्तं शिशिरानिलैर्मां
तरङ्ग हस्तैरुपगूहतीव ॥

RV 13 : 63

Sarayu, the mother

A river is revered as the mother of the people who live on its banks. Its water irrigates the fields raising the crops which nourish the people. They drink from its waters. The children play on its sands. When the waters recede, the cattle graze on its bed. At the end of the sacrificial ritual, the kings take the final ' Avabrta ' bath in the river and distribute their wealth on its banks. The people of Kosala dearly loved the Sarayu as their own mother and the Sarayu regarded them as her children.

One day the King (Dasaratha). died. Rāma was in exile and Bharata would not accept the kingdom. The river, Sarayu, felt widowed and was left without a protector even like Queen Kausalya, Rama's mother.

As he was returning to Ayodhya after his long exile, Rama tells Sita in the aerial car. "Look how, even when I am far away, the Sarayu puts forth its arms wafting cool breezes as if to embrace me with its arms as my mother would."

51. आनन्दजः शोकजमश्रु बाष्पः
तयोरशीतं शिशिरो बिभेद ।
गङ्गा सरय्वोर्जलमुष्ण तप्तं
हिमाद्रि निष्यन्द इवावतीर्णः ॥

RV 14 : 3

Tears of joy and tears of sorrow

The rivers which rise in the Himalayas have a unique feature. In summer, the river almost runs dry and turns into a narrow stream becoming hot by the scorching rays of the sun. But the summer heat melts the snows; the icy waters from the Himalayas flow down and meet the hot waters in the plains, making them cool again.

Similarly, Kausalya and Sumitra shed hot tears of sorrow during the long years of separation from their sons, Rama and Lakshmana. On their return, the tears of joy they shed profusely overwhelmed the hot tears of sorrow and turned them cool.

52. क्वचित् प्रभालेपिभिरिन्द्रनीलैः
मुक्तामयी यष्टिरिवानुविद्धा ।
अन्यत्र माला सितपङ्कजानां
इन्दीवरैरुत्खचितान्तरेव ॥
क्वचित् खगानां प्रियमानसानां
कादम्ब संसर्गवतीव पंक्तिः ।

अन्यत्र कालागुरु दत्त पत्रा
भक्तिर्भुवश्चन्दन कल्पितेव ॥
क्वचित् प्रभा चन्द्रमसी तमोभिः
छाया विलीनैः शबली कृतेव ।
अन्यत्र शुभ्रा शरदभ्रलेखा
रन्ध्रेष्विवालक्ष्य नभः प्रदेशा ॥
क्वचित्च कृष्णोरग भूषणेव
भस्माङ्गरागा तनुरीश्वरस्य ।
पश्यानवद्याङ्गि विभाति गङ्गा
भिन्नप्रवाहा यमुना तरङ्गैः ॥

RV 13 : 54-57

The confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna

The Ganga and the Yamuna are two of the great rivers of India; both have their origin in the Himalayas. After traversing hundreds of miles in the hills and plains, they join together in Prayag and flow for hundreds of miles through the plains before they reach the sea.

The waters of the Ganga are white and those of the Yamuna black. The Ganga with a large volume of water runs fast with gay abandon. The Yamuna runs still and deep with many under-currents. Temperamentally they are different. They ultimately commingle and merge in each other.

Rama describes the scene to Sita vividly evoking picturesque images in our minds of diversity and unity,

separateness and commingling, clarity, confusion and ultimate fusion as if the rivers have distinct personalities seeking their fulfilment in each other.

"Look; how the waters of the Ganga and the Yamuna mix together. Still distinct, they are like brilliant blue gems strung together with lustrous pearls, each gem and pearl separate from the other; gradually, they grow bigger and look like dark lotuses inter-woven with white lotuses to make a lovely garland, each complimenting and enhancing the beauty of the other and bringing out a composite charm.

Somewhere, the waters are like flocks of dark swans and white swans from the Manasa lake sitting on the expanse of water one group separate from the other; elsewhere, they are like streaks of dark sandalwood paste and white sandalwood paste, drawn on the floor, each forming a distinct pattern and the whole making an exquisitely beautiful drawing.

Here, it looks like moonlight seeping through a leafy bower into the shade, the white above and the darkness below: and, there, like the clear autumn night sky, seen through floating white clouds, the black above and the white below.

The white expanse of the Ganga calls to my mind Siva smeared all over with white ash, and the dark whirlpools of the Yamuna, still continuing in the Ganga, like the dark snakes adorning Siva's wrists, neck and head.

Ultimately, the rivers lose their separate identity and get fully merged in each other.

V. ANIMALS

53. सा किलाश्वासिता चण्डी
भर्त्रा तत् संश्रुतौ वरौ ।
उद्वामेन्द्र सिक्ता भूः
बिल भग्नाविवोरगौ ॥

RV 12 : 5

Nature changes

By nature, the earth is kind, generous and loving like a mother. The rain god has cooled it with refreshing showers. However, the waters fill up all the antholes and force the snakes out of them. We cannot blame the earth for that.

Kaikeyi was kind by nature; she bore a deep love for Rama. Dasaratha showered his affection on her. However, the demands that issued forth from her seeking Rama's exile and Bharata's coronation were harsh, even inhuman, in that they bit Dasaratha deep and caused his death.

54. शमयति गजानन्यान् गन्धद्विपः कलभोऽपि स-
न्भवति सुतरां वेगोदग्रं भुजङ्गशिशोर्विषम् ।
भुवमधिपति बालावस्थोऽप्यलं परिरक्षितुं
न खलु वयसा जात्यैवायं स्वकार्य सहो भरः ॥

VU 5 : 18

Respect the young

The young elephant, known by its scent, subdues the older and stronger elephants and is their natural leader. The poison of the young snake is penetrative and deadly.

The king may be young ; but, he can lead his people, protect the country and destroy its enemies.

Surely, not age but tradition and upbringing equip one to perform his duties.

55. रामाज्ञया हरिचमूपतयस्तदानीं
कृत्वा मनुष्य वपुरारुरुहु र्गजेन्द्रान् ।
तेषु क्षरत्सु बहुधा मदवारिधाराः
शैलाधिरोहण सुखान्युपलेभिरे ॥

RV 13 : 74

Monkeys on elephants

Monkeys are generally given to climbing trees and rocks and mountains ; they are not given to riding on other animals.

Rama brought the monkey hordes with him from Lanka to Ayodhya for the coronation festivities. He gave them beautiful clothes to wear and jewellery as well. Dressed as humans, he bade them sit on elephants and join the coronation procession. The monkeys enjoyed the ride happy in feeling that they were in their natural habitat of hills, so huge were the elephants, and the rut

flowing from the elephants appeared to the monkeys like mountain streams.

56. रक्षो वधान्तो न च मे प्रयासो
व्यर्थः स वैर प्रतिमोचनाय ।
अमर्षणः शोणितकाङ्क्षया किं
पदा स्पृशन्तं दशति द्विजिह्वः ॥

RV 14 : 43

A snake stepped on

One steps on a snake by accident; at once, the snake lifts up its hood in anger and strikes him. Why? Not because it wants to satisfy its hunger or thirst by drinking the victim's blood; but, to avenge the insult suffered by it.

Ravana carried away Sita, which was an insult to Rama's valour. Rama waged a great war and killed Ravana, his sons, ministers and a vast army. At the end of it all, he tells his brother; " Why did I wage the war? Not to rescue Sita in the hope of living happily ever after with her, but to redeem my honour, by killing the foe who insulted me by abducting my wife. Now that Ravana is dead, I am satisfied that my efforts were not in vain ".

57. लिङ्गैर्मुदः संवृत विक्रियास्ते
ह्रदाः प्रसन्ना इव गूढनक्राः ।
वैदर्भमामन्त्र्य ययुस्तदीयां
प्रत्यर्प्य पूजामुपदाच्छलेन ॥

RV 7 : 30

The crocodile

Kings are trained to hide their feelings, even to misguide their victims by lulling them into a sense of false security, when they are, in reality, vulnerable. The kings are particularly kind to those they wish to destroy, hiding their enmity under a pleasent aspect.

The crocodile is not seen in a clear pond. Even if it is on the banks, it looks inoffensive. The unwary victim who is tempted to have a bath in the clear waters is caught as in a vice.

58. सपदि मुकुलिताक्षी रुद्र संरम्भ भीत्या
दुहितरमनुकम्प्यामद्रिरादाय दोर्भ्याम् ।
सुरगज इव बिभ्रत्पद्मिनीं दन्तलग्नां
प्रतिपथ गतिरासीद् बेगदीर्घीकृताङ्गः ॥

KS 3 : 76

Elephant carrying the lotus stalk

Uma was offering worship to Siva, when he was in concentrated 'Dhyana' (deep meditation). The god of love, Madana, shot an arrow causing perturbation in Siva's mind and disturbing his meditation. Siva opened his third eye and burnt Madana to ashes. Trembling with fear and with eyes shut, Uma fell into a swoon like an uprooted lotus-stalk. All this happened in a trice.

Her father, Himavan, came down from the snowy heights and carried the unconscious Uma in his long and powertul arms and strode away over the lofty peaks reaching to the skies.

A lotus stalk with its flower in bloom lay uprooted, faded and uncared for. An elephant came from the heavens and carried the lotus-stalk between its long and powerful tusks; he extended his body and walked away majestically heavenward with long strides.

59. विधिना कृतमर्धं वैशसं
ननु मां कामवधे विमुञ्चता ।
अनपायिनि संश्रयद्रुमे
गजभग्ने पतनाय वल्लरी ॥

KS 4:31

Half destruction

A lordly elephant walks majestically along, uprooting the tall trees and plants in the forest. A big tree breaks down; along with it, falls a creeper which was entwining the tree. What, then, would be the fate of the creeper?

Rati laments her lot after Siva destroyed her husband, Kama. "The destruction of the tree is only half-destruction. Why was not the other half also destroyed?"

VI. CHILDREN

60. प्रभा महत्या शिखयेव दीपः
त्रिमार्गयेव त्रिदिवस्य मार्गः ।
संस्कारवत्येव गिरा मनीषी
तया स पूतश्च विभूषितश्च ॥

KS 1 : 28

The child adds lustre to the father

What is the glory of the lamp? Surely, the light it sheds.

Why is the milky way across the heavens luminous? Because it is the path of the heavenly Ganga.

What makes speech pure? The conduct of the speaker and the deed the speech describes.

So did Uma add to the glory, the splendour and the purity of her father, Himavan, who was already great, by the majesty of the mountains, the splendour of perpetual snows and the purity of the waters of many rivers.

61. तां हंसमालाः शरदीव गङ्गां
महौषधिं नक्तं इवात्मभासः ।
स्थिरोपदेशामुपदेश काले
प्रपेदिरे प्राक्तन जन्म विद्याः ॥

KS 1 : 30

Environment and heredity

The development of the child is influenced by its environment and heredity; the child learns good manners and social behaviour by observing the conduct of its elders. The child attracts others, and its inherent qualities exhibit themselves at the appropriate time.

The swans flock to the shores of the Ganga from the Manasa lake during the autumn and adorn the river; the herbs in the caverns of the mountain near the river manifest their inherent glow at night.

62. चन्द्रं गता पद्मगुणान्न भुंङ्क्ते
पद्माश्रिता चांद्रमसीमभिख्याम् ।
उमामुखं तु प्रतिपद्य लोला
द्विसंश्रयां प्रीतिमवाप लक्ष्मीः ॥

KS 1:43

Friends with conflicting tastes

We have friends of many sorts, each of whom we love and respect for some special quality or other. It happens that one quality in a friend is incompatible with a different quality in another; in result; we are not able to enjoy the company of both friends together,

The goddess of beauty created the lotus and the moon, both of them pleasing to the eye and the mind: but, she could not enjoy the beauty of the lotus in the moonlight or the moon reflected in the lotus-pond. The

goddess had to wait for the birth of Uma to enjoy the beauty, fragrance and charm of the lotus in her eyes and mouth and the cool, pleasant and soothing aspect of the moon in her face.

63. उन्मीलितं तूलिकयेव चित्रं
सूर्यांशुभिर्भिन्नमिवारविन्दम् ।
बभूव तस्याश्चतुरस्र शोभि
वपुर्विभक्तं नवयौवनेन ॥

KS 1:32

A girl takes shape

A painter's brush fills the outlines of a picture : a form takes shape; various colours reveal the beauty of the art.

The lotus bud opens up to the rays of the sun and reveals the natural beauty and perfect symmetry of the flower.

In the first flush of youth, Uma's lanky figure filled and showed the undulations of her body and the perfect symmetry of her form in the four quarters, the breasts and the hips, developed into a composite. natural loveliness.

64. यथा प्रसिध्दैर्मधुरं शिरोरुहै :
जटाभिरप्येवमभूत्तदाननम् ।
न षट्पद श्रेणिभिरेव पङ्कजं
सशैवल सङ्गमपि प्रकाशते ॥ KS 5:9

Intrinsic beauty

The beauty of the lotus is the same whether it is in a pond of mud and moss or in a clear mountain lake with bees buzzing around it. It is the lotus which lends charm to its environment, not the environment to the lotus.

In her father's palace in the Himalayan heights, the well-groomed, dark, curly hair on Uma's head was like swarm of bees hovering over her lotus-like face. Even when, clad in the bark of trees and with hair matted, she was doing penance in the forest, the beaury of her face was no less than before.

65 निवात पद्म स्तिमितेन चक्षुषा
नृपस्य कान्तं पिबतः सुताननम् ।
महोदधेः पूर इवेन्दु दर्शनाद्
गुरुः प्रहर्षः प्रबभूव नात्मनि ॥

RV 3:17

Sharing the joy

The ocean sees the full moon rise from itself; it can not contain its joy and shares it with the waves lashing about and rising to welcome the moon, One's joy finds expression only in sharing it with others.

The king drank the beauty of his child's face with his eyes open wide like lotuses in a still pond; he proclaimed the joyous event and joined his people in celebrating the event.

VII. WOMEN

66. अयं स ते तिष्ठति संगमोत्सुको
विशङ्कसे भीरु यथोऽवधीरणाम् ।
लभेत वा प्रार्थयिता न वा श्रियं
श्रिया दुरापः कथमीप्सितो भवेत् ॥

AS 3 : 13

अयि, आत्मगुणावमानिनि, क इदानीं शरीर-
निर्वापयित्रीं शारदीं ज्योत्स्नां पटान्तेन वारयति ।

Will he take me ?

Sakuntala is an unsophisticated girl brought up in a hermitage. She falls in love with Dushyanta and pines for him ; but, she does not know how he feels towards her : she is not conscious of the charm she holds for her lover. After learning that he is king, she is not sure whether he will accept her for wife.

She expresses her thought to her friends. Hiding behind the bower, Dushyanta listens to the talk. Filled with joy, he says to himself ; "One prays to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, beauty, valour and all that one could wish for. He may or may not be worthy of her grace. But, when Lakshmi herself wishes to bestow her favours on a person, who is difficult for her to get? "

Her friends tell Sakuntala: "You depreciate your charm. Who can obstruct the cool autumnal moonlight with the hem of one's garment?"

67. मनीषिता सन्ति गृहेषु देवताः
तपः क्व वत्से क्व च तावकं वपुः ।
पदं सहेत भ्रमरस्य पेलवं
शिरीष पुष्पं न पुनः पतत्रिणः ॥

KS 5:4

Sirisha flower

Indian poets have a special affection for the 'sirisha' flower, used as an ear ornament, which is extremely delicate. The tender 'sirisha' flower can bear the bee sucking honey from it; but, it cannot bear the feet of even the smallest bird.

The girl's body is likewise; it can take a lover's embrace, but not the rigours of penance.

68. तं वीक्ष्य वेपथुमती सरसाङ्गयष्टिः
निक्षेपणाय पदमुद्धृतमुद्वहन्ती ।
मार्गाचल व्यतिकराकुलितेव सिन्धुः
शैलाधिराज तनया न ययौ न तस्थौ ॥

KS 5:85

To go or not to go

A river is on its natural course to the sea. On the way stands a mountain. For a moment, the river does not know what to do. After a brief halt, it encircles the

mountain, pours into the valley beyond, fills it up and continues on its course.

Uma engaged in a long dispute with Siva without knowing who he was. At the end, she wanted to leave the place in dudgeon. Siva revealed himself to her. She had already lifted one foot. In her shyness, face to face with the very person she was praying to get, she began to tremble. Her lovely, slender body was covered with perspiration and she was in a fix what to do; she quickly recovered from her confusion and went home.

69. दिष्ट्या धूमाकुलित दृष्टेरपि यजमानस्य
पावक एव आहुति पातिता ।
वत्से, सुशिष्य परिदत्तेव
विद्याशोचनीयासि संवृत्ता ॥

AS 4 : 3

An involuntary action

A priest is engaged in a sacrificial ritual. The fire is lit, melted butter poured into it and twigs added to the fire. The smoke billows up and blinds the priest momentarily. In the confusion, the offering drops from his hands into the fire, just when and where it ought to go.

Kanva was looking for a suitable bridegom on whom to bestow his daugher, Sakuntala. He had a premonition of a misfortune befalling her and went on a short pilgrimage seeking to avert the disaster. When her father's vision was momentarily turned away from her,

Sakuntala met Dushyanta; they fell in love with each other. On his return, Kanva saw she was with child and learned what had happened. He felt his mission fulfilled like education imparted to a deserving student.

The offering had dropped when and where it should have.

70. शरीर सादादसमग्र भूषणा
मुखेन सालक्ष्यत लोध्रपाण्डुना ।
तनु प्रकाशेन विचेय तारका
प्रभात कल्पा शशिनेव शर्वरी ॥

RV 3 : 2

A pregnant woman

In northern latitudes, there is no real darkness during summer nights. The sky is neither bright nor dark; the stars are few and the moon looks pale, particularly towards dawn.

The pregnant queen looks pale and her few jewels lack lustre like the moon and the stars in the early dawn of a summer day.

71. दिवं मरुत्वानिव भोक्ष्यते भुवं
दिगन्त विश्रान्त रथो हि तत्सुतः ।
अतोऽभिलाषे प्रथमं तथाविधे
मनो ववन्धान्य रसान्विलङ्घ्य सा ॥

RV 3 : 4

Eating mud

It is natural for pregnant women to crave for eating mud. The queen was no exception to this, although she could have had any kind of food she wished to eat.

Perhaps her craving was due to her desire to acquaint her unborn son with the earth over which he was destined to rule.

72. निधानगर्भामिव सागराम्बरां
शमीमिवाभ्यन्तर लीन पावकाम् ।
नदीमिवान्तः सलिलां सरस्वतीं
नृपः ससत्त्वां महिषीममन्त ॥

RV 3 : 9

Caring for the future

Respect for the child reflects one's faith in the future of the race ; the child will one day lead the people and carry on the best traditions of the solar race, protecting and increasing the prosperity of the land.

The king considered the queen carrying his child as the good earth carrying the treasures of minerals and herbs, as the 'vanni' tree carrying the spark of fire, and as the subterranean river flowing with clear water. All these resources have to be protected and conserved for the benefit of generations of people. So also the child in the womb; it represents all the potential wealth of the country, the spark of life and the purity of conduct. The woman carrying the child is the repository of all these.

73. शय्यागतेन रामेण
माता शातोदरी बभौ ।
सैकतांभोज बलिना
जाह्नवीव शरत्कृशा ॥

RV 10 : 69

Kausalya with baby Rama

During the rains, the Ganga is swollen with floods covering its dunes and depths alike. After the rains, the floods recede and the river becomes a narrow stream amidst the white sands. A lotus bud offered by a devotee lies on the sands.

So, Kausalya, once big with child, is now thin and lying on the white sheets of the broad bed, with the new-born infant, Rama, refulgent, tender and beautiful like the lotus, by her side.

74. सुतौ लक्ष्मण शत्रुघ्नौ
सुमित्रा सुषुवे यमौ ।
सम्यगाराधिता विद्या
प्रबोध विनयाविव ॥

RV 10 : 71

Learning gives birth to wisdom and conduct

The fruits of learning are wisdom and good conduct, which together constitute culture; wisdom being the faculty to discriminate the good from the bad and good conduct being the restrained practice of what is good,

So, Sumitra, the personification of learning, gave birth to twins, Lakshmana and Satrughna, the personification of wisdom and conduct.

75. सञ्चारिणी दीपशिखेव रात्रौ
यं यं व्यतीयाय पतिंवरा सा ।
नरेन्द्र मार्गाट्ट इव प्रपेदे
विवर्णभावं स स भूमिपाल: ॥

RV 6:67

The torch-bearer

A torch-bearer walks past turreted houses along the pavement of the city's main thoroughfare. As he approaches the house, the light from the torch gradually brightens up the turrets, which catch for a moment the full brightness. As the torch goes past, the turrets fall into a gloom and the house cast in the shadows, ultimately to get enveloped in utter darkness.

Indumati passed through the assembly of princes to choose a husband from among them. Radiant in form and bright as a lamp, as she approached each prince, his face lit up in anticipation of her choosing him. As she went past, he became downcast and gloomy in the knowledge that she had rejected him.

76. सा संभवद्भि: कुसुमैर्लतेव
ज्योतिर्भिरुद्यद्भिरिव त्रियामा ।
सरिद्विहङ्गैरिव लीयमानै.
रामुच्य मानाभरणा चकासे ॥

KS 7:21

A bride bedecked

Creepers burst forth with many-coloured flowers in the vernal season, some red. some yellow, some blue, each hue merging into the other as in a rainbow. It is a common sight to see the same flower changing its colour every moment; sometimes, a creeper appears to have put forth multi-coloured flowers simultaneovsly.

The dark sky is brilliantly lit with stars, big and small, some clustered together and others widely spaced out, but each with its distintive shape and colour.

A river looks beautiful wifh flocks of Chakravaka birds sitting in rows on its banks.

So did Parvati look, with her slender dark form decked with jewels set with variegated gems of all hues and strings of pearls, from her flowing dark tresses down to her toes.

77. हृष्टापि सा ह्रीविजिता न साक्षाद्
वाग्भिः सखीनां प्रियमभ्यनन्दत् ।
स्थली नवाम्भः पृषताभिवृष्टा
मयूर केकाभिरिवाभ्रवृन्दम् ॥

RV 7:69

The voice of the peacock

The earth receives the first showers from its lord, the cloud, and is immensely gratified. How does the earth express its appreciation and joy? It expresses them through the shrieks and dances of the peacocks.

In Aryan society, there was generally no courting before marriage; the bride and bridegroom hardly saw each other. When Aja was returning to his country after his marriage witn Indumati, hjs party was waylaid by some chieftains. Aja gallantly fought them back and defeated them. Indumati was at first disturbed by the unforeseen encounter, but was later immensely elated by her husband's prowess, of which she was eyewiness. How did she express her appreciation ?

Her bashfulness forbade Indumati from directly felicitating her huaband. So she conveyed her felicitations through the voice of her friends.

78. स किलाश्रममन्त्यमाश्रितो
निवसन्नावसथे पुराद्बहिः ।
समुपास्यत पुत्र भोग्यया
स्नुषयेवाविकृतेन्द्रियः श्रिया ॥

RV 8:14

A daughter-in-law serves

By tradition, the earth is considered the wife and the people the children of the king. He is in duty bound to protect them from all external and internal enemies, to promote their welfare and always to place their interests above his.

When the king becomes old and is not able to perform his duties any longer, he entrusts his kingdom to a suitable person, usually his son, trained to shoulder the

responsibilities and enters the third stage of life, the Vanaprastha, retiring to the forest, before finally renouncing the world. In that setting, the earth, wedded to the heir, becomes, as it were, the old king's daughter-in-law.

The earth looked after the old king, Aja, as a daughter-in-law would: serving him food, keeping the hermitage clean, bringing flowers for worship, and ministering to his simpls needs. Controlling his senses, the old king also would not expect much from the daughter-in-law, nor would he claim her services as a matter of right.

79. प्रासादकालागुरु धूमराजि -
स्तस्याः पुरो वायुवशेन भिन्ना
वनान्निवृत्तेन रघूत्तमेन
मुक्ता स्वयं वेणिरिवाबभासे ॥

RV 14:12

A wife in separation from husband

A woman pining for her husband, long separated from her, pays no attention to her toilet. Her flowing tresses are now one mass of braid, matted and unkempt. The husband returns home, has her hair cleaned and dried with fragrant incense and lovingly parts her hair into curly tresses,

Ayodhya was pining for Rama, exiled for fourteen years. On his return, the townspeople burnt incense which gave out fragrant smoke issuing forth as dark columns from the houses ; the fumes were soon separated by the breeze and were wafted away in spirals.

80. ज्येष्ठाभिगमनात् पूर्वं
तेनाप्यनभिनन्दिता ।
साभूद्रामाश्रया भूयो
नदीवोभयकूल भाक् ॥

RV 12:35

Promiscuous passion

In the rainy season, the river is in floods embracing both banks. In summer, the stream is thin touching here one bank and there the other.

Surpanakha was in that state. She approached Rama to slake her passion; he sent her to Lakshmana, who tossed her back to Rama. Promiscuous by nature she went from one man to another, when in heat, even as the river in summer.

81. अथ व्यवस्थापितवाक् कथंचित्
सौमित्रिरन्तर्गत बाष्प कण्ठः ।
औत्पातिकं मेघ इवाश्मवर्षं
महीपतेः शासनमुज्जगार ॥
ततोऽभिषङ्गानिल विप्रविद्धा
प्रभ्रश्यमानाभरण प्रसूना ।
स्वमूर्ति लाभप्रकृतिं धरित्रीं
लतेव सीता सहसा जगाम ॥

RV 14:53 & 54

Communication breaks down

An unpleasant, even shocking, news has to be broken to a loved and honoured friend or relative. We think well in advance how to soften the blow and deliberate on the choice of words and how and when to convey the message. But, to what avail? As the time for communication comes, emotion overwhelms us; we lose our balance and let ourselves be drawn into the vortex of suffering along with the friend or relative.

Sita was heavy with child. A scandal had spread about her, of which she was not aware. In all innocence, she expressed to Rama her longing to revisit the Dandaka forest where she had spent thirteen happy years in his company. Rama took advantage of this request to plan a deceit on her and have her abandoned in the forest. Lakshmana who had shared the long exile with them was chosen by Rama as the instrument to carry out this cruel plan.

After reaching a secluded spot in the forest, where Sita had to be left, Lakshmana broke down,. With tears choking his throat, a sudden torrent of words issued from him abruptly and loudly, conveying the king's orders. The tornado of scandal about her struck poor Sita and the force of Lakshmana's words was like a hail of stones. The few jewels she was wearing slipped from her body as flowers from a creeper. She fell in a heap, bereft of everything she had, her self-respect, her equanimity, her famed beauty, on the all-suffering earth, her mother, from whom she was born.

८१. उपस्थितां पूर्वमपास्य लक्ष्मीं
वनं मया सार्धमसि प्रपन्नः ।
तदास्पदं प्राप्य तयातिरोषात्
सोढास्मि न त्वद्भवने वसन्ती ॥

RV 14 : 63

Discarding the other women

A great man, accomplished and virtuous, is dearly loved by two women, equally distinguished for their kindness, charity, compassion, beauty and, above all, the love they bear him. One of them, his wedded wife, was privileged to have his company; the other would not have minded sharing him with the wife, but was discarded by him. The discarded woman bore the grudge for many long years: and. when the opportunity came, contrived to have the wife thrown out by the man for no fault of hers.

Rama was the man. After marrying Sita, he was to have been crowned king, wedded as it were to the kingdom, 'Rajyalakshmi'. Sita followed him into exile, enjoying his company for fourteen years, without a rivel to his affections.

Discarded by Rama, 'Rajyalakshmi' had stayed behind in Ayodhya, suffering separation from Rama throughout this long period. Rama returned from exile and was crowned king. Sita was Queen for a short while: but, she was abandoned by Rama within a few months on an unfounded suspicion. It looked as if 'Rajyalakshmi'

whose home was Ayodhya and who had borne her grudge against Sita, could not bear Sita sharing Rama with her in her own house.

83. क्व न मां त्वदधीन जीविता
विनिकीर्य क्षणभिन्न सौहृदः ।
नलिनीं क्षतसेतुबन्धनो
जलसंघात इवासि विद्रुतः

KS 4:6

A dam burst

Imagine a dam across a river: the reservoir of water behind the dam is full, A lotus plant blooms somewhere in the reservoir. Suddenly, the dam bursts and the water runs off. The bond which held the water and the lotus together is no more. The lotus is left alone, forlorn and withering.

The God of love, Kama, was burnt to ashes by Siva's anger. Kama's wife Rati laments her condition. "I lived with you; I was entirely dependent on you: I had no other sustenance. The bond between us has broken in a moment. O, where do I stand now? What support have I?".

84. तदिदं परिरक्ष शोभने
भवितव्य प्रिय संगमं वपुः ।
रविपीत जला तपात्यये
पुनरोघेन हि युज्यते नदी ॥

KS 4:44

A string of hope

"The scorching sun has sucked dry the last drop of water in the river. Yet, the river is not destroyed. At the end of summer. the monsoon rains will surely set in and the river will again carry the flood waters. Don't despair. You will be united with your husband at the end of your penance. Don't destroy your body". The gods thus dissuade Rati from self-immolation.

85. विललाप स बाष्पगद्गदं
सहजामप्यपहाय धीरताम् ।
अभितप्तमयोऽपि मार्दवं
भजते कैव कथा शरीरिषु ॥

RV 8:43

Love tempers

Heat makes hard metals malleable. Human hearts are no exception: even the stout hearts, hardened by suffering, melt under heat. The only difference is that physical heat is applied by external means, while the heat generated by mental passions is internal.

One such passion is the pang of separation from the beloved.

86. रक्षितव्या खलु प्रकृति पेलवा, प्रियसखी
को नाम उष्णोदकेन नवमालिकां सिञ्चति

AS 4:1

Losing the present in the past

Heavy with child and with a distant look in her eyes, Sakuntala is thinking of her lover from whom she has had no news since he left her. Weary and forlorn, she did not notice the guest at her door. He felt affronted, taking her absentmindedness for deliberale insult, curses her and departs. She is oblivious even of the curse. Later, learning of her pitiable condition, her friend remarks on the event thus:

A tender shoot puts forth from a 'navamalika creeper in search of a support. Find it a support if you will: or, atleast, leave it to fend for itself. What abominable cruelty to sprinkle scalding water on the poor shoot.

87. चञ्चन्मनोज्ञ शफरी रसना कलापाः
पर्यन्त संस्थित सिताण्डज पंक्तिहाराः ।
नद्यो विशाल पुलिनान्त नितम्ब बिम्बा
मन्दं प्रयान्ति समदाः प्रमदा इवाद्य ॥

RS 3:3

Wanton woman

A woman proud of her beauty walks slowly along, her waist band flashing with gems, the pearl necklaces on her breasts swinging to and fro and her broad hips revealed by a low dress.

Even so, a river in the autumn meanders along its course, with sparkling 'saphari' fish playing in the stream, strings of white birds sitting in rows on its banks and the broad expanse of the white sands revealed by the shrinking water.

VIII. LOVE

88. अप्याकर समुत्पन्ना मणिजातिरसंस्कृता ।
जातरूपेण कल्याणि नहि संयोगमर्हति ॥

MA 5 : 18

Love's labours not lost

Precious stones and gold are both extracted from the earth: they are found in nearby, may be the same, mines. Yet, the stone has to be cut and polished and the gold melted and refined before they can be set together to make a jewel.

Though of royal birth, this girl had to undergo chastisement and several hardships and the king to endure the pangs of separation and suffer distress before they could be united in wedlock.

89. गच्छति पुरः शरीरं
धावति पश्चादसंस्थितं चेतः
चीनांशुकमिव केतोः
प्रतिवातं नीयमानस्य ॥

AS 1 : 33

The mind of the lover

A chariot is driven against a stiff breeze. The banner carried on the chariot flies backward faster with the combined speed of the chariot and the breeze.

Dushyanta walks back to his camp after his meeting with Sakuntala. While his body moves forward, his mind runs backward even faster to the girl he had left behind, wending her way slowly to the hermitage.

90. तामाश्रित्य श्रुतिपथगतामास्थया लब्धमूलः
संप्राप्तायां नयनविषयं रूढराग प्रवालः ।
हस्त स्पर्शै मुकुलित इव व्यक्त रोमोद्गमत्वात्
कुर्यात् क्रान्तं मनसिज तरुर्मां रसज्ञं फलस्य ॥

MA 4:1

The tree of love

The seed of love struck root. When ? When I heard about her and felt interested in her.

The shoots of love came forth. When ? When I saw she became the object of my vision and passion burst forth.

The bud of love appeared. When ? When the touch of her hands sent forth a horripilation through my body.

When will the tree of love also give me a taste of its succulent fruit ?

91. नद्या इव प्रवाहो विषमशिला संकट स्खलित वेगः ।
विघ्नित समागम सुखो मनसिशयः शतगुणी भवति ॥

VU 3:8

Ardour increases manyfold

The mountain stream runs merrily past the crags in a valley. Suddenly its flow is obstructed by huge

boulders with sharp edges. Its speed slows down ; but, its ardour increases manyfold. Dashing against the rocks, one stream breaks into a hundred rivulets and they all flow on faster than before, eventually to join their lover, the sea.

The lovers' anticipation of the joy of union encounters obstacles; but, they only serve to increase hundredfold the joy of their union.

92. मुखार्पणेषु प्रकृति प्रगल्भाः
स्वयं तरङ्गाधर दान दक्षः ।
अनन्य सामान्य कलत्रवृत्तिः
पिबत्यसौ पाययते च सिन्धूः ॥

RV 13 : 9

Many lips kissed

The kiss is the sweetest when a woman eagerly rushes to her lover and offers up her lips to be kissed. What height of bliss is it when many women rush separately to the same lover and the lover is able to kiss all of them simultaneously, without one woman knowing that another is also being similarly enjoyed at the same moment ?

The rivers of the world are the women who rush from their birth-place, the mountains, to their lover, the sea. Each river comes alone, unchaperoned. The sea lord gives his billowy lips to each river 'that slips with passion' into his embrace, a pleasure not within the reach of any earthly or heavenly being.

93. तं यथाऽऽत्म सदृशं वरं वधू·
अन्वरज्यत वरस्तथैव ताम् ।
सागरादनपगा हि जाह्नवी
सोऽपि तन्मुखरसैक निर्वृतिः ॥

KS 8:16

The unabated joy

The waters of the Ganga constantly flow into the sea. The sea-lord tastes the fragrant, dewy lips of the river-maiden, ardently rushing and offering herself up to be kissed and enjoyed. The pleasure never abates as the river never dries up.

So did Uma offer her lips with life-giving nectar to Siva; their ardour was mutual and they were never satiated with their enjoymeut.

94. तेषां दिक्षु प्रथित विदिशालक्षणां राजधानीं
गत्वा सद्यः फलमविकलं कामुकत्वस्य लब्धा ।
तीरोपान्त स्तनितसुभगं पास्यसि स्वादु यस्मा-
त्सभ्रूभङ्गं मुखमिव पयो वेत्रवत्याश्चलोर्मि ।

MD 1:24

The lover's fee

A lover sees his beloved from a distance. She is cross with him; her eyebrows are knitted and she turns her face away from him. He steals up to her from behind and gently takes a long, slow kiss from her trembling lips, even as she expresses a murmur of protest.

The cloud is over the famous Vidisa. Vetravati flows through the city, its ripples and wavelets gently lapping against its shores. The cloud bends low and drinks the sweet waters of the river, the reward for travelling over the hot plains of Central India, carrying the Yaksha's message.

95. शिष्यतां निधुवनोपदेशिनः
शंकरस्य रहसि प्रपन्नया ।
शिक्षितं युवति नैपुणं तया
यत्तदेव गुरुदक्षिणीकृतम् ॥

KS 8 : 17

The reward for teaching

In ancient India, education was free; indeed, it was considered a sin to accept a fee for imparting knowledge. The student lived with the master for several years, doing all the chores, and learnt whatever was taught to him by the master. At the end, the teacher was given, or promised, a parting gift, suited to the means of the pupil; the gift may be deferred to a time when the student can afford to give it.

Uma was the student, Siva the teacher; sexual love was the subject of learning. The lessons were imparted in privacy. When she started learning the art of love, she was a novice, a bashful maiden; when she finished, she was an expert in all its techniques.

What about the present to the teacher?

Her youthful expertise in the art was itself the present she gave her teacher. The equal and reciprocal enjoyment they had while sharing the delicacies of love was the reward for his teachings. And, that enjoyment she gave him according to the instruction she had received from him. What more could the teacher expect?

96. तस्योत्सङ्गे प्रणयिनइव स्रस्तगङ्गादुकूलां
न त्वं दृष्ट्वा न पुनरलकां ज्ञास्यसे कामचारिन् ।
या वः काले वहति सलिलोद्गारमुच्चैर्विमाना
मुक्ताजाल ग्रथितमलकं कामिनीवाभ्रवृन्दम् ।

MD 1:63

Love-laden Alaka

The cloud messenger sent by the 'yaksha' to his wife is still at a height over Alaka. The cloud sees the mountain crests overlooking the valley cradling a town brilliantly lit up with multi-coloured lights. The sparkling white stream of the Ganga waters descends from a mountain slope and encircles the town. In its course, somewhere a spray is visible, somewhere it swirls into a pool, and somewhere it is a mere streak until it disappears altogether.

The town is like a young woman, decked with multi-coloured gems set in jewellery lying on her lover'slap. Desire swells up. In the frolics of love, her white garment, like Ganga's frothy waters, gathers up in folds, screws up, falls apart and eventually drops out.

The cloud messenger comes low. Lofty mansions are seen in the undulating landscape. The dark cloud enters the forecourts and terraces of the mansions. Silvery drops of rain fall.

The dark tresses of fhe young woman resembling the clouds weave through the raised shoulders and body of her lover. The net of white pearls woven in her braid shine through the tresses and then falls loose.

She casts aside the last traces of modestry and enjoys her lover to her heart's content.

The dark clouds enter the mansions and sport as they please.

97. आससाद मिथिलां स वेष्टयन्
पीडितोपवन पादपां बलैः ।
प्रीतिरोधमसहिष्ट सा पुरी
स्त्रीव कान्त परिभोगमायतम् ॥

RV 11 : 52

A lover's embrace

The intensity of love has the quality of extreme concentration; in her happiness, the woman is oblivious of the hurt and pain caused to her by the fierce embrace of her lover. Nor does the lover think for a moment that he may be hurting her. Each lives only for the joy of the other.

Mithila, the city of Sita's birth and Janaka's capital, was decked for the marriage festivities; the parks

around the city were in good trim and full of flowers and plants, shrubs and trees. Dasaratha came with a large retinue of his ministers, army, men, horses, elephants and chariots. They all encamped in the parks; and, in no time, the well-tended lawns, flowers, shrubs and the parks were ravished by the fierce embrace of the visitors. But, the city's love for its guests was such that it did not feel ravished, nor did the guests feel that they were causing the city any hurt. The parks and the guests were equally overwhelmed and lived in the joy of their union.

98. सदयं बुभुजे महाभुजः
सहसोद्वेगमियं व्रजेदिति ।
अचिरोपनतां स मेदिनीं
नवपाणिग्रहणां वधूमिव ॥

RV 8 : 7

Gentle love

A broad-shouldered strong young man is just married. He has to create an atmosphere of confidence and love in his young wife, yet a stranger to him, with sweet words, tenderness and pleasant manners, so that she may be encouraged to shed her shyness and fear, and spontaneously engage herself in the sports of love with her feelings aroused. If he is rough and forces his attentions on her, without regard to her feelings, she will feel repulsed by him and the marriage may end in disaster.

Aja became king by the prowess of his arms; in enjoying his newly acquired kingdom, he behaved with

tenderness and love; he knew that, otherwise, the people may find him repulsive. He behaved towards the earth as a young man would to his newly married wife.

99. साक्षात् प्रियामुपगतामपहाय पूर्वं
चित्रार्पितां पुनरिमां बहुमन्यमानः
स्रोतोवहां पथि निकाम जलामतीत्य
जातः सखे प्रणयवान् मृगतृष्णिकायाम् ॥

AS 6 : 16

Seeking the mirage

A man passes by a river with clear waters touching its banks; yet, he goes in search of a mirage to slake his thirst.

Dushyanta compares himself to this mad man. Sakuntala came to him full of love, seeking his protection when she needed it most. He repudiated her mercilessly. Filled with remorse, when the full impact of his cruelty dawned on him, Dushyanta commits her lovely form to a picture and looks at it. Having missed the reality, of what use is the mirage?

IX. OTHER

100. मारुतिः सागरं तीर्णः
संसारमिव निर्ममः ॥

RV 12:60

Renunciation

One can't go far with fetters on; the most important of the fetters being the attachment to oneself and one's possessions. Attachment limits one's vision, impedes his activity and usefulness and makes him selfish, self-loving and possessive.

Most fetters arise on account of the feeling: " It's mine. " If one has nothing to lose, not even the fetters, he is free.

Describing how Hanuman crossed the ocean to Lanka, the poet compares his achievement to one who crosses the ocean of life, having shed the feeling of owning anything.

APPENDIX I

THE SOURCES OF SIMILES

1. Raghu Vamsam: (R. V.)	Canto	1 :	4, 8, 36.
	Canto	3 :	2, 4, 9, 17, 18, 36, 37.
	Canto	4 :	9, 37.
	Canto	6 :	67, 86
	Canto	7 :	30, 49, 55, 69
	Canto	8 :	7, 9, 13, 14, 37–38, 43, 93.
	Canto	9 :	69, 80, 82.
	Canto	10 :	48, 69, 71.
	Canto	11 :	18, 21, 52, 82, 89, 92.
	Canto	12 :	5, 35, 60, 92, 97
	Canto	13 :	9, 29, 54-57, 63, 67, 74.
	Canto	14 :	3, 12, 37, 38, 41 48, 53-54, 63.
	Canto	17 :	72, 74, 75.
	Canto	19 :	51. TOTAL 60

2.	Kumara Sambhavam (K. S.)	Canto 1: 2, 3, 28, 30, 32. 43.	
		Canto 3: 76	
		Canto 4: 6, 31, 44, 46.	
		Canto 5: 4, 9, 85.	
		Canto 6; 79	
		Canto 7: 21	
		Canto 8: (12) 16, 17.	
		Canto 13: 36	TOTAL 19
3.	Megha Dutam: (M. D.)	Part 1: 24, 51, 63. Part 2: 1.	TOTAL 4
4.	Abhijnana Sakuntalam (A. S.)	Act 1: 33, Act 3: 13; Act 4: 1, 3; Act 5: 4, 7, 12; Act 6: 16, 31	TOTAL 9
5.	Malavika Agnimitram (M.A.)	Act 1: 6, 8, 9,: Act 4: 1, Act 5: 18	TOTAL 5
6.	Vikrama Urvasiyam: (V.U.)	Act 3: 8; Act 5: 18	TOTAL 2
7.	Ritu Samharam (R.S.)	Part 3: 3	TOTAL 1
			GRAND TOTAL 100

APPENDIX II

UPAMANAS : OBJECTS OF COMPARISON

1. Elements :	1, 12, 14, 21, 22, 24, 37, 60 72, 89.
2. Nature	
i. Celestial Objects	1, 2, 3, 4, 17, 32, 47, 49, 52 60, 63, 65, 66, 70, 76.
ii. Cloud, sea :	8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 30, 33, 34 35, 36, 42, 65, 92, 93, 94, 96
iii. Rivers and Mountains :	21, 30, 43, 50, 51, 68, 72, 73 77, 80, 83, 84, 87, 91, 92, 93 94, 96, 99.
iv. Earth :	21, 39, 40, 72, 77
3. Human Beings :	20, 25, 28, 71, 78, 79, 82, 87 94, 96, 97, 98.
4. Animal Life :	9, 37, 43, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 57, 58, 59.
5. Bird Life :	37, 52, 60, 61, 64, 67, 76, 77.

6. Flowers :	3, 19, 39, 45, 52, 58, 62 63, 64, 65, 67, 73, 76, 81, 90.
7. Plant Life :	5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 44, 46, 52, 59, 61, 72, 76, 81, 86, 90, 97.
8. Metals and Minerals:	29, 48, 85, 88.
9. Lamp :	17, 38, 41, 60, 75:
10. Language :	26, 31, 60, 74, 95.
11 Mythology :	1, 13, 18, 36, 44, 52, 66.
12. Abstract Objects :	18, 27, 82, 100.
13. Others :	15, 23, 30, 34, 48, 69, 89, 99

ERRATA

Page	Line	For	Read
3	2	influence	influenced
	4	नुदंस्त्रम :	नुदंस्तम :
	15	or	nor
7	7	फले :	फलै :
9	15	sometime	some time
11	3	वणमीशे	वर्णमीशे
13	12	Raghau	Raghu
14	12	anything	every thing
15	3	गभत्तिमानिव	गभस्तिमानिव
16	4	वह्लि	वह्नि
17	5	Tataka	Tadaka
18	26	नारीमवीरमिव	नारीमवीरामिव
25	21	ftom	from
27	13	ढीपार्चि	दीपार्चि
28	17	is	was (in 2 places)
33	28	ताटकान्तक :	ताडकान्तक :
40	8	tradition	lineage
41	24	हृदा.	ह्रुदा
43	7	विमुञ्जता.	विमुच्चता
46	21	प्रसिध्दैर्मधुरं	प्रसिद्धैर्मधुरं
,,	22	ढाननम्	दाननम्